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INCOMING TELEGRAM Departme of State

XR POL 33-1 JORDAN RIVER
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC 1297
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ZEN/AMEMBASSY TUNIS UNN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECNE OFTUO MAY 24
DEF 12-5 LEB
REF: DEPTEL 1245; PARIS 6651 TO DEPARTMENT

GENERAL DISCUSSION WITH LEBANESE FONMIN TAKLA

IN RESPONSE MY REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH FONMIN PHILIPPE TAKLA BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR CAIRO PRIMINS CONFERENCE BEGINNING MAY 26, TAKLA RECEIVED ME AT HIS HOME SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 23, EXPLAINING ALL HIS TIME TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT DEBRIEFINGS IN CONNECTION CAIRO, PARIS, ROME TRIP AND BY FEVERISH PREPARATIONS FOR CAIRO TRIP BUT THAT HE ANXIOUS FOR TALK WITH ME. TAKLA WAS IN PLEASANT AND RELAXED MOOD AND WAS OBVIOUSLY

PAGE TWO RUQMBE 032B C O N F I D E N T I A L
PARPARED TO COVER ALL ASPECTS U.S.-LEBANON RELATIONS AND TO REASSURE ME ON ANY ASPECTS ABOUT WHICH WE MIGHT HAVE QUESTIONS.

HELOU TRIP TO PARIS

WITHOUT PROMPTING, TAKLA IMMEDIATELY STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT HELOU TRIP TO PARIS WAS SOLELY EFFORT AT STRENGTHENING TRADITIONAL FRANCO-LEBANESE TIES AND

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SHOULD ABOVE ALL NOT BE INTERPRETED AS REFLECTING REORIENTATION OF LEBANESE POLICY IN FAVOR OF FRANCE AND AWA[illegible] FROM UNITED STATES. LEBANON WANTED EVEN CLOSER RE[illegible]NS WITH U.S., TAKLA ASSERTED. HE STATED THAT C[illegible]LLY LEBANON HAD BEEN LINKED WITH FRANCE FOR SE[illegible]RAL HUNDRED YEARS. AS RESULT THE LEBANESE LOOKED TO FRANCE WHEN THINKING OF LOVE AND POETRY. BUT IT WAS TO THE U.S. THEY LOOKED FOR PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE.

TAKLA WENT ON TO GIVE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF PARIS DISCUSSIONS, STRESSING THROUGHOUT THAT LEBANON DID NOT WANT INCREASED LOCAL FRENCH POLITICAL INFLUENCE. SPECIFICALLY, TAKLA SAID DE GAULLE HAD BEEN "COURTEOUSZ

PAGE THREE RUGMBE 0328 C O N F I D E N T I A L
ENOUGH TO REFRAIN FROM RAISING INTERNATIONAL OR INTERNAL LEBANESE ISSUES, TALKS HAVING BEEN CONFINED TO BILATERAL AND REGIONAL MATTERS.

LEBANESE HAD URGED FRENCH TO INCREASE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS IN LEBANON. FRENCH-SUPPORTED SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS SHOULD BE MODERNIZED AND UPDATED FOLLOWING U.S. EXAMPLE. LEBANON HAD TURNED DOWN CULTURAL AGREEMENT, CITING FACT U.S. HAD NONE AND LEBANON DID NOT WISH TO BE EXCLUSIVE.

FRENCH ARMS FOR LEBANON

TAKLA SAID THAT DURING DECEMBER 1964 MEETING WITH COUVE DE MURVILLE HAD HAD REQUESTED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE FOR FRENCH SALE OF MIRAGES TO LEBANON. (AIRCRAFT ONLY MILITARY ITEM OF REAL INTEREST TO BOTH LEBANON AND FRANCE, TAKLA NOTED.). FRENCH HAD GIVEN SUCH AGREEMENT DURING HELOU VISIT, BUT NOTHING DEFINITELY DECIDED AS YET, TAKLA STATED.

TAKLA COMMENTED BASIC PRICE OF MIRAGE HAD GONE UP SINCE DECEMBER, DUE TO STRUCTURAL MODIFICATIONS, TO 5 MILLION LEBANESE POUNDS AND THAT SPARE PARTS, TRAINING AND ARMAMENT WOULD BRING COST PER COPY TO 7 MILLION POUNDS.

PAGE FOUR RUCMBE 0328 C O N F I D E N T I A L
TAKLA SAID LEBANON HAD HOPED TO OBTAIN BETWEEN 15 AND 20 PLANES, BUT AT THIS COST LEBANON WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD AS MANY AS IT WANTED. FUNDS FOR AIRCRAFT PURCHASE FROM UAC, TO BE AUGMENTED BY SCARCE LEBANESE FUNDS, WOULD BECOME AVAILABLE ONLY OVER PERIOD OF YEARS AND PURCHASE RATE OF PERHAPS ONLY 2 PLANES PER YEAR WOULD BE POSSIBLE. FIRST AIRCRAFT DELIVERY TIME OF MINIMUM 24 MONTHS WAS EXCESSIVE IN TAKLA'S VIEW. DEFINITE IMPRESSION GIVEN BY TAKLA THAT FRENCH SALE OF MIRAGES TO LEBANON WAS NOT A CERTAINTY, WITH HIGH COST A MAJOR OBSTACLE.

PALESTINE PROBLEM

TAKLA SAID DE GAULLE'S POSITION ON PALESTINE HAD BEEN IN HARMONY WITH GENERAL WESTERN POSITION. DE GAULLE HAD POINTED OUT TO LEBANESE THAT GRANCE, WEAK IN 1948, HAD SAID NEITHER "YES" NOR "NO" TO CREATION OF ISRAEL, TAKLA RELATED. DE GAULLE CONCLUDED THAT ISRAEL EXISTS, WOULD NOT DISAPPEAR BUT HE HAD NO PARTICULAR PALESTINE SOLUTION. FOLLOWING LEBANESE PRESENTATION OF VIEWS ON JORDAN WATERS DE GAULLE COUNSELED MODERATION IN WORD AND DEED, AS HE SAID HE HAD ALSO DONE WITH ISRAELIS.

GP-3. MIDDLETON
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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEIVO OFTUO MAY 24

REF: DEPTEL 1245; PARIS 6651 TO DEPARTMENT

LOCAL EFFECT OF HELOU TRIP

TAKLA CONCLUDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY THAT HELOU'S PRESTIGE HAD BEEN ENORMOUSLY ENHANCED BY TRIPS TO CAIRO, PARIS AND VATICAN, A COMBINATION WHICH HAD PLEASED BOTH MOSLEMS AND CHRISTIANS AND OFFENDED NEITHER. TAKLA FELT CHRISTIANS HAD BEEN ESPECIALLY HAPPY NASSER HAD IMPOSED NO NEW BURDENS ON LEBANON. ALL LEBANESE WERE NOW FULLY UNITED BEHIND THEIR PRESIDENT, TAKLA CONCLUDED.

JORDAN WATERS

PAGE TWO RUCHDE 033B C O N F I D E N TWUI
TAKLA SAID NOTHING NEW RE LEBANESE POSITION ON JORDAN WATERS HAD EMERGED FROM HELOU TRIP AND ACKNOWLEDGED DIVERSION WOULD BE KEY TOPIC AT CAIRO "SUB-SUMMIT" MAY 26. I AGAIN STRESSED ISRAELIS CONCERNED OVER LEBANESE ACTIVITY ON SREID CANAL AND WOULD VIEW MOST SERIOUSLY ANY LINK7UP WITH SYRIANS. IN REPLY MY QUERY, TAKLA SAID DISTANCE SEPARATING LEBANESE AND SYRIAN CONSTRUCTION WORKS ON SREID "HAD NOT CHANGED". HE COMMENTED THAT SREID LINK-UP "NOT URGENT" AND WAS CERTAINLY NOT BEING PUSHED BY LEBANESE.

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TAKLA NOTED FURTHER THAT AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA RATIFIED BY LEBANESE PARLIAMENT WAS STILL PREREQUISITE FOR ANY LINK-UP ON SREID. IN RESPONSE TO MY NOTING PRESENCE OF LEGAL EXPERT IN LEBANESE DELEGATION TO CAIRO, TAKLA MAINTAINED NO RPT NO LEGAL PREPARATION FOR LINK-UP UNDER WAY. LEGAL EXPERT IN QUESTION WAS TO WORK OUT "STATUS OF FORCES" AGREEMENT FOR ANY ARAB TROOPS CALLED INTO LEBANON, TAKDA REVEALED. LEGAL MEANS TO INVITED TROOPS INTO LEBANON EXISTED, TAKLA QUIPPED, AND NOW LEBANON WANTED LEGAL MEANS TO GET THEM OUT.

TAKLA ALSO CONFIDED LEBANESE HAD RECOGNIZED POSSIBLE

PAGE THREE RUCMBE 0330 C O N F I D E N T I A L
IMPACT ON WORLD OPINION OF ISRAELI CONTENTION THAT LEBANESE DIVERSION OF HASBANI WATER TO LITANI WOULD RESULT MERELY IN DUMPING MORE WATER WASTEFULLY INTO SEA. LEBANON WOULD THEREFORE BEGIN CONCENTRATING ON IRRIGATION PROJECTS AND DAM CONSTRUCTION IN CONNECTION WITH DIVERSION WORKS, TAKLA ASSERTED.

WHEN I MENTIONED RE RECENT SYRIAN-ISRAELI BORDER CLASHES THAT WE STILL ATTEMPTING RESTRAIN ISRAELIS, TAKLA HOPED FERVENTLY WE WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

PALESTINE REFUGEES

IN VIEW CAIRO CONFERENCE REPORTEDLY TO TAKE UP REFUGEE PROBLEM, I URGED THAT LEBANON COOPERATE WITH UNRWA IN EFFECTING ECONOMIES AND IN RAISING ADDITIONAL FUNDS. I STRESSED IT DIFFICULT FOR US TO JUSTIFY IN CONGRESS PROGRAM WHICH NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY SOUND, POINTING OUT LEBANESE DIRECTOR OF REFUGEE AFFAIRS RAFIQ CHAHINE HAD SUSPENDED INVESTIGATIONS AIMING AT REMOVING INELIGIBLES FROM REFUGEE ROLLS, A STEP IN WRONG DIRECTION. U.S. WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN REDUCING THE DISPROPORTIONATE SIZE OF ITS CONTRIBUTION, I CONCLUDED.

PAGE FOUR RUCMBE 0338 C O N F I D E N T I A L
TAKLA REPLIED HE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH PROBLEM, HAVING DISCUSSED IT THOROUGHLY WITH BOTH MICHELMORE AND CHAHINE. HE COMMENTED HE FELT "SOMETHING COULD BE WORKED OUT" BETWEEN ARABS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES. TAKLA ADDED HE HAD RECEIVED PROMISE FROM COUVE DE MURVILLE OF FRENCH CONTRIBUTION TO UNRWA, PROBABLY IMPORTANT QUANTITY OF WHEAT. TAKLA ALSO PROMISED TO URGE KUWAITIS TO MAKE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION.

GP-3 MIDDLETON.
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